

NOVEMBER 1, 2000

SCHAKOWSKY SPEAKS AT RALLY IN SUPPORT OF WORKERS

**CALLS ON REPUBLICANS TO STOP BLOCKING HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS
THAT PREVENT REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) tonight called on Republicans in Congress to stop blocking health and safety standards that will help prevent repetitive strain injuries (RSIs). During Stop the Pain Rally, Schakowsky said that over 600,000 workers every year are injured by RSIs and that RSIs account for one-third of all serious workplace injuries. She added that RSIs cost billions of dollars a year in lost productivity and medical costs, and that women, who are 46% of the workforce, suffer 63% of all RSIs.

The Stop the Pain Rally focused on protecting workers from on-the-job RSIs and crippling back injuries by allowing the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) from finally implementing workplace safety (ergonomics) standards. Despite years of studies showing that safety standards could significantly reduce injuries, major corporations and the Republican leadership have blocked OSHA from acting. The House-passed Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill would give the next President the ability to prevent ergonomics standards from going into effect next July.

Injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome do not prevent people from working. Instead, these injuries prevent people from opening up their hands, meaning that they can not hold their children or prepare foods. The rally called on Congress to pass legislation to reduce workplace injuries and protect working families by getting out of the way and allowing OSHA safety standards to go into effect.